

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 4558

LIMDIS

USIA FOR IBS, IEE, IPS

E. O. 11652: XGDS 4

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH DISSIDENT GENERAL (RETIRED)
PETR GRIGORENKO

1. SUMMARY. WELL KNOWN DISSIDENT PETR GRIGORENKO TOLD EMBOFF APRIL 2 THAT SOVIET INTERNAL SITUATION, PARTICULARLY FOR DISSIDENTS AND NON-CONFORMISTS, IS WORSENING. HE BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT WESTERN PUBLIC OPINION AND FOREIGN RADIO BROADCASTS ARE USEFUL, SINCE THEY TEND TO MITIGATE REGIME'S ACTIONS IN PUBLICIZED CASES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. HE ALSO CLAIMED THAT VOA IS NOW BEING "SELECTIVELY JAMMED." HE WARNED OF SOVIET "DECEPTION" IN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL POLICIES, BUT SEEMED TO BE FULLY IN FAVOR OF DETENTE, BECAUSE IT ALLOWS VIEWS FROM THE WEST TO HAVE SOME MITIGATING EFFECT ON SOVIET REGIME'S INTERNAL POLICIES. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBOFF ATTENDED SMALL PARTY APRIL 2 AT APARTMENT OF MOSCOW ARTIST AT WHICH RETIRED GENERAL AND FAMED DISSIDENT PETR GRIGORYEVICH GRIGORENKO (KNOWN FOR HIS SUPPORT OF SOVIET HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT, FOR HIS DEFENSE OF CRIMEAN TATARS AND FOR HIS MORE THAN FIVE YEARS SERVICE IN MENTAL INSTITUTIONS
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FOR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES) WAS ALSO PRESENT. FOR ALMOST TWO

HOURS GRIGORENKO GAVE HIS VIEWS ON SOVIET POLITICAL SITUATION AND U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS. MAIN POINTS FOLLOW:

3. INTERNAL POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE. GRIGORENKO WAS VERY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT SOVIET INTERNAL SITUATION, VIEWING PRESENT PERIOD AS ONE OF HARDENING OFFICIAL ATTITUDE TOWARD DISSIDENTS AND NON-CONFORMISTS. HE POINTED OUT THAT DISSIDENT ANATOLY MARCHENKO HAD JUST BEEN GIVEN FOUR YEAR PRISON TERM FOR MINOR ADMINISTRATION VIOLATION OF TERMS OF HIS EXILE, BUT SAID THAT MARCHENKO WAS REALLY BEING PUNISHED FOR "BEING HONEST" IN STATING HIS INTENTION TO EMIGRATE TO U.S. RATHER THAN TO ISRAEL, AS AUTHORITIES DESIRED. WORSE YET, ACCORDING TO GRIGORENKO, MARCHENKO WAS TREATED LIKE A COMMON CRIMINAL AND WAS LED INTO COURTROOM IN KALUGA IN HANDCUFFS. GRIGORENKO ALSO NOTED RECENT SENTENCING OF TWO JEWISH ACTIVISTS, NASHPITS AND TSITLENOK, TO FIVE YEARS EXILE FOR "UNFURLING A FEW BANNERS" ON MOSCOW'S KALININ PROSPEKT. GRIGORENKO SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT EXILE IN THIS CASE WOULD BE ALMOST AS BAD AS PRISON, AND THAT IT DID NOT MERELY MEAN THAT THE TWO COULD NOT LIVE IN MOSCOW. THE ACTIVISTS WOULD PROBABLY BE SHIPPED OFF TO SOME DISTANT TOWN, NOT ALLOWED TO TRAVEL TO NEXT SETTLEMENT OR EVEN VISIT A CLUB WITHOUT PERMISSION, AND WOULD BE FORCED TO TAKE WHATEVER WORK, PROBABLY HEAVY MANUAL LABOR, WAS ASSIGNED TO THEM. OTHER DISSIDENTS, TOO, ARE SUBJECT TO INCREASING PRESSURE FROM AUTHORITIES, HE SAID. ASIDE FROM BEING "FOLLOWED EVERYWHERE," GRIGORENKO HIMSELF IS NOT HARRASSED MUCH BECAUSE HE IS NOT ABLE TO BE AS ACTIVE AS HE WOULD LIKE. HE IS NOTICABLE NOT IN GOOD HEALTH.

4. WESTERN PRESSURE ON BEHALF OF DISSIDENTS. GRIGORENKO FELT THAT ONLY WESTERN PUBLIC OPINION AND MANIFESTATIONS OF SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN USSR ARE "SAVING US." KNOWLEDGE OF SUCH ATTITUDES MAKES AUTHORITIES THINK BEFORE ACTING. GRIGORENKO SAID, FOR INSTANCE, THAT WHILE DISSIDENT VLADIMIR BUKOVSKIY IS STILL IN PRISON, AT LEAST HE IS TREATED AND FED BETTER THAN FORMERLY BECAUSE OF WESTERN CAMPAIGN ON HIS BEHALF. SAME IS TRUE OF UKRAINIAN DISSIDENT VLADIMIR MOROZ WHOSE CONDITIONS HAVE IMPROVED. BESIDES, HE SAID, BUKOVSKIY AND OTHERS IN PRISON KNEW OF ACTIVITIES OF THEIR SUPPORTERS IN WEST AND THIS GAVE THEM STRENGTH TO SURVIVE THEIR ORDEALS.

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IN HIS CASE, GRIGORENKO SAID IT WAS ONLY WESTERN PUBLIC OPINION WHICH BROUGHT ABOUT HIS RELEASE FROM A MENTAL HOSPITAL SHORTLY BEFORE THE NIXON VISIT IN 1974.

5. WESTERN RADIO BROADCASTS. GRIGORENKO PRAISED WESTERN RADIO BROADCASTS INTO THE SOVIET UNION AS THE MAJOR FACTOR ACTING TO MITIGATE TREATMENT OF NON-CONFORMISTS BY AUTHORITIES. HE SAID VOA AND OTHER RADIOS WERE WIDELY AND CAREFULLY LISTENED

TO AND THAT REPORTS FROM ABROAD BECOME IMPORTANT PART OF INFORMATION GRAPEVINE IN PRISONS AND MENTAL HOSPITALS. HE ALSO SAID SECURITY OFFICIALS THROUGHOUT COUNTRY LISTENED TO FOREIGN RADIOS AND THIS CAUSED THEM TO BE MORE CAREFUL IN THEIR TREATMENT OF POLITICAL PRISONERS. GRIGORENKO AND SEVERAL OTHERS PRESENT ALSO CLAIMED THAT VOA RUSSIAN WAS STILL "JAMMED SELECTIVELY," PARTICULARLY IN MOSCOW. THEY ALLEGED THAT RECENTLY, WHENEVER VOA MENTIONED PORTUGAL, THE BROADCAST WAS INTERFERED WITH. GRIGORENKO URGED THAT VOA AND OTHER RADIOS CONTINUE TO "BRING THE TRUTH" INTO THE COUNTRY.

6. SOVIET PURPOSES. GRIGORENKO SPOKE STRONGLY ABOUT SOVIET "DECEPTION" IN DEALING WITH WEST. MAIN PURPOSE OF SOVIET ACTIVITIES, HE SAID, WAS TO ERECT "FACADE" TO DELUDE WEST INTO THINKING IT COULD COOPERATE WITH USSR. HE FEARED WEST WAS SWALLOWING THE SOVIET LINE ENTIRELY AND HE SAW EVIL INTENT BEHIND SOVIET "FACADE" BOTH IN INTERNAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLICIES. ALL ONE HAD TO DO, HE SAID, WAS TO LOOK AT WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN PORTUGAL AND INDOCHINA TO UNDERSTAND TRUE SOVIET INTENTIONS.

7. COMMENT: GRIGORENKO'S ATTITUDES ARE UNDERSTANDABLY INFLUENCED BY HIS TREATMENT BY THE REGIME, BUT THEY ARE SPOKEN WITH STRENGTH AND CONVICTION. ALTHOUGH HE WARNS OF SOVIET INTENTIONS, HE CLEARLY FEELS THAT BETTER SOVIET RELATIONS WITH THE WEST HAVE BEEN GENERALLY USEFUL IN TERMS OF SOVIET DOMESTIC POLICIES. HE SEEMS TO FEEL THAT THE WEST SHOULD BE CAREFUL IN DEALING WITH THE SOVIETS, BUT THAT A WORSENING OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS WOULD MEAN EVEN HARSHER TREATMENT FOR DISSIDENTS AND NON-CONFORMISTS.

8. AIRGRAM FOLLOWS.
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